

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of identifying an edge switch of a packet – based communication network, said edge switch having a port to which a specified user is connected, the method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

(a) sending a unicast request packet from a policy server to the specified user, the unicast request packet including destination address data and a selected identification code;

(b) detecting said selected identification code at said port;

(c) diverting the packet to a management agent for the switch; and

(d) returning to the server an identification of the switch and said user.

2. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to~~ as in claim 1 further ~~and~~ including:

causing said specified user to reply to said unicast request packet by means of a reply packet including said identification code; and

detecting at said edge switch the identification code in said reply packet.

3. (New) A method of identifying an edge switch of a packet – based communication network, said edge switch having a port to which a specified user is connected, the method comprising:

(a) sending a unicast request packet from a policy server to the specified user, the unicast request packet including destination address data of the specified user and a selected identification code;

(b) responding at said specified user to send a reply packet including said destination address data and said selected identification code;

(c) parsing said reply packet to detect said selected identification code;

(d) on detection of said selected identification code by said switch, diverting said reply packet to a management agent for the switch; and

(e) returning to the server from said switch an identification of the switch and said user.

4. (New) A method of identifying an edge switch of a packet –based communication network, said edge switch having a port to which a specified user is connected, the method comprising:

(a) obtaining the internet protocol (IP) network address of said specified user;

(b) sending a unicast request packet from a policy server to the specified user, the unicast request packet including as a destination address said IP network address and including a selected identification code and payload;

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- (c) responding at said specified user to said unicast packet, by returning a reply packet including said IP network address, said identification code and said payload;
- (d) detecting said selected identification code at said port of said edge switch;
- (e) diverting said reply packet to a management agent for said edge switch;
- (f) modifying said payload; and
- (g) returning to said policy server said reply packet including said payload as modified, an identification of said edge switch and an identification of said specified user.